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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/525,979	02/28/2005	Hiroaki Sano	012774-003	5008
21839	7590	06/26/2007	EXAMINER	
BUCHANAN, INGERSOLL & ROONEY PC POST OFFICE BOX 1404 ALEXANDRIA, VA 22313-1404				FISCHER, JUSTIN R
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
		1733		
		MAIL DATE		DELIVERY MODE
		06/26/2007		PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/525,979	SANO ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Justin R. Fischer	1733	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 28 February 2005.
 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1 and 3-14 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 1,3,4 and 6-12 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) 5,13 and 14 is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ .
3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>22805</u> .	5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application
	6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

2. Claims 1, 3, 4, and 6-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Suzuki (JP 07329182). As best depicted in Figure 1, Suzuki discloses a tube connecting apparatus comprising a first pressing unit 21,22, a second pressing unit 31,32, a supporting member (piston 24), and a cutting unit 4, wherein each of the first and second pressing units (part of holding assemblies 2 and 3) are independently movable via a first and second movement unit 5 (on rail 54).

With respect to claim 3, the apparatus of Suzuki includes a cylinder 23 or a position regulating member, which regulates a predetermined position of the first pressing unit supported by the supporting member 24.

Regarding claims 4 and 7-11, the apparatus of Suzuki is capable of operating in the claimed manner. It is emphasized that the claims are directed to tube connecting apparatus and limitations regarding the method of joining such tubes do not further define the structure of the claimed apparatus.

As to claim 6, the second movement unit 5 moves the second holding assembly (combination of members 31 and 32) and the supporting member (piston 24) supports the first pressing unit (combination of members 21 and 22).

With respect to claim 12, the pressing units have contact portions 210 and 310, respectively (Figure 1). In this instance, the contact portions have a defined width, such that one end of the width (closest to position of cutting element) can be viewed as a first position and the opposite end of the width (closest to tube ends), within the same contact portion, can be viewed as a second position. Thus, the method of Suzuki does involve pressing tubes at first, second, and third positions as required by the claimed invention, wherein a cutting plate is advanced between second and third positions. It is noted that the claims as currently drafted do not require pressing the tubes at a second position subsequent to pressing at a first position.

Allowable Subject Matter

3. Claims 5, 13, and 14 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

As to claim 5, the respective engagement portions of Suzuki do not have a first and second inclined surface that engage with each other and one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention would not have found it obvious to modify the apparatus of Suzuki in such a manner,

Regarding claims 13 and 14, the method of Suzuki does not involve a step of pressing the tubes at a first, second, and third position, wherein (a) the first position is sandwiched between the second and third positions and (b) the applied pressure, at the third position, is larger than a corresponding pressure at a first position.

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Conclusion

4. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to **Justin R. Fischer** whose telephone number is (571) 272-1215. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F (7:30-4:00).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Richard Crispino can be reached on (571) 272-1226. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.



Justin R Fischer
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1733

JRF
June 22, 2007